

## War enters 'NEXT PHASE'

Say Israel, US as Iran attacks intensify; Tehran strikes Israel, claims destroying US radars in UAE, Jordan, Qatar

AGENCIES

Israel and the United States yesterday stepped up their attacks against Iran and its allies in the sprawling Middle East war, as US President Donald Trump demanded Iran's "unconditional surrender" to end the crisis.

Fresh strikes rocked Iran and Lebanon yesterday, which followed warnings from Israel and the US that the war was entering a new phase. Tehran residents yesterday described the strikes as the

'worst night' of attack so far.

"We are now moving to the next phase of the operation," Israel's military chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir said in a televised statement.

"We have additional surprises ahead which I do not intend to disclose," he added.

The Israeli army said it hit over 400 targets across Iran yesterday.

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth also announced, "firepower over Iran

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Smoke rises following airstrikes in a central area of the Iranian capital Tehran yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

## 'Give peace a chance'

Urges UN rights chief as 'major humanitarian emergency' declared in ME

AFP, Geneva

The United Nations rights chief yesterday called for cool heads to prevail in the Middle East and urged the warring sides to pull back and "give peace a chance".

The crisis sparked in the Middle East a week ago by the barrage of US and Israeli strikes on Iran "has been spreading like wildfire", Volker Turk told reporters in Geneva.

"The world urgently needs to see steps to contain and extinguish this blaze," he said, lamenting that "instead, we are only seeing more inflammatory, bellicose rhetoric, more bombings, more destruction, killings, and escalation that fuels it further".

"I urge the states involved to take immediate steps to de-escalate, to give peace a chance. And on other states to call clearly on those involved to pull back," he said.

"Cool heads must prevail if we are to prevent further terror and devastation for civilians."

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Trump demands 'unconditional surrender' from Iran, says deploying ground troops will be 'waste of time'

US military says it has sunk over 30 Iranian ships so far

Israel claims destroying 80% of Iran's air defence, over 60% of missile launchers

Iran says countries have begun mediation efforts

Saudi Arabia 'intercepts 3 missiles' launched towards air base

UAE 'intercepts' 9 ballistic missiles, 109 drones

Iranian army says it attacked 'US-owned' oil tanker off Kuwait

## Negligence fuels surge in gas-related fires

Experts call for regular monitoring of pipelines, greater caution by users

RAFIUL ISLAM

A couple of hours before dawn, 32-year-old Pinky Akter woke up and went to the kitchen to prepare seheri. Her family members were asleep.

As she lit the stove connected to a household gas pipeline, an explosion ripped through their house in the capital's Rayerbazar, engulfing it in flames.

Pinky and three of her family members suffered burns and were rushed to the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery around 4:30am on February 23.

This was one of the five incidents of gas explosions over the last two weeks.

Fire officials and experts say such blasts from accumulated gas have been on the rise due to the negligence of gas suppliers and a lack of awareness among users.

According to fire service data, gas cylinder-related fires are on the rise, with 920 incidents reported last year, compared to 704 in 2024. They made up 3.4 percent of the country's 27,059 total fire incidents last year.

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### EXPERTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- Periodically check building's gas lines and those in kitchen
- Keep kitchen doors, windows open to allow any leaked gas to diffuse into the air
- Turn off gas burners properly, especially before going to bed
- Clean septic tanks regularly, ensure ventilation so that gas can escape
- Install gas detectors at homes, workplaces
- Authorities should conduct regular inspections to detect faults in pipelines

## 10 of a family burnt in 'gas explosion'

Doctors say 5 in critical condition

STAR ONLINE REPORT

Ten people, including women and children, sustained burn injuries after a suspected gas leak triggered an explosion in a house in Dhaka's Turag area early yesterday.

The incident happened around 3:30am on the first floor of a three-storey building near Member Bari on Kabarstan Road in Sector 10 of Kamarpara. Parts of the ground floor and first-floor walls collapsed.

The injured were admitted to the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

The victims were identified as Rubel Chowdhury, 30, a ride-sharing motorcyclist; his pregnant wife Sonia Akter, 25; their daughter Roza, 4; Sonia's elder sister Riya Akter, 27; Sonia's brother Enayet Matobbor, 32, a Bangladeshi expatriate to Dubai who was visiting his sister; Enayet's wife Delwara Begum, 28; their

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## Survival odds grim for victims of gas fires

Doctors say inhalation injury, higher burn percentages reduce survival chances

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

With up to 40 percent burns to their bodies, three cousins from Chattogram's Haliashahar have been fighting for their lives at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery (NIBPS) in the capital.

Aged between four and 10, the condition of Umme Ayman Snigdha, Farhan Ahmed Anas and Humayer Ahmed Ayesha is stated to be critical.

They lost six of their family members in a fire caused by a gas pipe leak at their house on February 23. The six suffered 40 to 100 percent burns to their bodies.

"Our entire family was shattered in the blink of an eye," said Abul Kashem, a maternal uncle of Ayesha who lost both her parents.

Data show that half of the victims of similar fire incidents, who were treated at NIBPS over the past year, had 20 to 100 percent burns to their bodies, making it extremely difficult for doctors to save them.

The issues of gas explosions and fire safety came to the fore again after a series of fire incidents linked to gas leaks were reported in Chattogram and three other districts within a span of three days last month.

Apart from the casualties at the Haliashahar house, four members of a family, including a three-year-old, suffered burns in a fire reportedly triggered by a gas leak at a rented flat in the capital's Rayerbazar on February 23.

The following day, four members of another family, including a toddler, were injured in an explosion caused by a "gas line leakage" in Cumilla's Daudkandi upazila. Two of them suffered over 40 percent burns to their bodies.

On February 25, three members of a family suffered burns in a blast reportedly caused by a gas line leak in Chandpur's Kachua upazila.

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## HISTORIC MARCH 7



## The day the nation held its breath

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Bangladesh bristled with anticipation, convinced that a defining moment was approaching.

The military junta in West Pakistan refused to transfer power despite the Awami League's sweeping victory in Pakistan's first national election. Across East Pakistan, anger surged. By the first week of

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## The speech that emboldened us all

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Motorists crowd two filling stations in the city's Paribagh yesterday after Juma prayers. The congestion it caused nearly blocked the street, which is usually quiet on weekends.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## People overwhelm filling stations amid fear of supply crunch

BPC caps fuel sales per vehicle

### HOW MUCH FUEL CAN EACH VEHICLE BUY PER DAY?



Motorcycles up to 2 litres



Private cars up to 10 litres



SUVs & minibuses up to 20-25 litres of petrol/octane



Pickup trucks & local buses up to 70-80 litres of diesel



Long-distance buses, trucks, covered vans & container trucks up to 200-220 litres of diesel

ASIFUR RAHMAN and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Filling stations across the country, including in Dhaka and Chattogram, were overcrowded on the weekend as panic buying continued amid fears of supply disruptions due to the war in the Middle East.

The Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) yesterday capped the amount of fuel that can be sold to vehicles each day.

In a statement, the state-run fuel corporation said that amid the ongoing global crisis, negative reports circulating by some media and on social media about the country's fuel stock have triggered a surge in demand.

"To meet this additional demand,

dealers are trying to collect more fuel than usual from depots," the statement said.

"Reports have also emerged that some consumers are attempting to purchase more fuel than necessary from dealers or filling stations and store it without authorisation. These matters have come to the attention of the Energy and Mineral Resources Division, BPC, and other relevant authorities."

The government sought to reassure the people that fuel imports are continuing as scheduled and shipments are arriving regularly.

At the same time, fuel is being transported from the main installations to depots across the country by rail and tankers.

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