



"The Gaza model must not be replicated in Lebanon. Across the region, and far beyond, civilians are enduring serious harm and living under profound insecurity."
UN chief Antonio Guterres

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3-day weekend worsens supply to pumps

Banks, logistics services remained closed for several days, disrupting payments and delaying deliveries

ASIFUR RAHMAN and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Fuel supply shortfall shows little sign of easing, as global uncertainty, disruptions during the extended Eid holidays and weekend, and high domestic demand continue to pressure the energy chain.

Amid the US-Israel war on Iran, concerns are mounting over shipments, particularly for April, with only a limited number of planned consignments having been confirmed.

Officials said the war has already disrupted procurement, with suppliers delaying shipments or invoking force majeure.

Six of the 17 shipments planned for March remain unconfirmed.

Extended Eid holidays worsened the situation, as banks and logistics services remained closed for several days, disrupting payments and delaying deliveries. Pump owners said they struggled to place orders or secure supplies.

- ➔ Shipments of 2 lakh tonnes of crude from KSA, UAE facing delays, cost overruns
- ➔ Crude oil shipment from Abu Dhabi National Oil Company cancelled
- ➔ Crude shipment of 1 lakh tonnes from KSA delayed, cost increased
- ➔ A vessel with 10,000 tonnes of diesel, 20,000 tonnes of jet fuel reached

"There is no major improvement. The situation is more or less the same as before," said Mohammad Nazmul Haque, president of Bangladesh Petroleum Dealers, Distributors, Agents and Petrol Pump Owners Association.

"You can manage one or two days, but a five-day banking gap cannot be covered. That is where the problem started during Eid," he added.

After the resumption of work on Tuesday following the Eid holidays, offices were closed yesterday on Independence Day. Today and tomorrow are weekly holidays.

Nazmul said operators are limiting sales to Tk 2,000 for cars and Tk 500 for motorcycles to manage demand.

"We are trying to avoid panic with whatever fuel we have," he said, noting long queues and pressure from anxious customers.

"People are anxious. Many are trying to take fuel even when they do not need it immediately, fearing shortages or price hikes. This is adding to the pressure on the system," he added.

Despite official assurances of adequate stock, long lines were seen at filling stations in Tejgaon, Mohakhali, and Bijoy Sarani.

Ride sharing drivers and others reported waiting hours to refuel, often leaving empty-handed.

THE SITUATION

The government plans to import 14 shipments by sea and three via pipeline in April, including 25,000 tonnes of octane, 1,00,000 tonnes of crude, and 3.03 lakh tonnes of diesel. But only 1.1 lakh tonnes of diesel have been confirmed so far.

Bangladesh has not received any crude this month, as shipments have been cancelled or delayed.

Two shipments totalling 2,00,000 tonnes of crude from Saudi

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FLAG OF FREEDOM

A young girl waves the national flag, her hand holding a history written in blood and sacrifice, and the promise of a future she will inherit, at the National Martyrs' Memorial in Savar on Independence Day yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Bangladeshi ships may use the Strait of Hormuz

Say media reports citing Iranian foreign minister

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh has been named among several "friendly nations" whose vessels may be allowed safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, according to international media reports.

Iran has indicated that ships linked to a number of countries, including Bangladesh, can still transit the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz under coordinated arrangements.

The narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, through which a fifth of the world's oil is normally shipped, has been under an Iranian chokehold since the United States and Israel launched a war against Iran last month.

Talking to Iranian state TV, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi clarified that the Strait, contrary to the Western media claims, is not completely closed, reports The Indian Express yesterday.

"Many of the shipowners, or the countries that own these vessels, have contacted us and requested that we ensure their safe passage through the strait. For some of these countries that

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US will be Iran's 'worst nightmare'

Trump warns Tehran if it doesn't agree to 15-point proposal; Iran sees plan as 'unfair'; its navy chief killed

AGENCIES

A US proposal for ending nearly four weeks of fighting is "one-sided and unfair", a senior Iranian official told Reuters yesterday, while US President Donald Trump said Iran must make a deal or face a continued onslaught.

The Iranian official said the proposal, conveyed to Tehran by Pakistan, "was reviewed in detail on Wednesday night by senior Iranian officials and the representative of Iran's supreme leader".

It lacked the minimum requirements for success and served only US and Israeli interests, the official said, while stressing that diplomacy had not ended despite the lack for now of a realistic plan for peace talks.

Trump described the Iranians as "great negotiators" but added that he was not sure he was "willing to make a deal with them to end the war".

Iran has launched strikes against Israel, US bases and Gulf states as well as effectively blocking Middle East fuel exports via the Strait of Hormuz since the US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28.

"They now have the chance, that is Iran, to permanently abandon their nuclear ambitions and to join a new path forward," Trump said during a Cabinet meeting at the White House.

"We'll see if they want to do it. If they don't, we're their worst

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Alireza Tangsiri

INDEPENDENCE DAY Nation pays solemn tribute to war heroes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation yesterday observed 55 years of independence and the National Day in a befitting manner, as people from all walks of life streamed to the National Martyrs' Memorial in Savar and other war memorials across the country to honour those who laid down their lives for liberation.

Many arrived with their children, while students from various educational institutions, carrying banners, festoons, and floral wreaths gathered at the National Memorial.

The premises echoed with patriotic songs and processions, reflecting a deep sense of pride and remembrance.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman also paid tributes to the martyrs of the 1971 Liberation War by placing wreaths at the memorial at 6:00am.



They then stood in solemn silence as a mark of respect and also signed the visitors' book on the premises.

Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury, cabinet members, chiefs of the three services, senior BNP leaders, war-wounded freedom fighters, family members of the martyrs, foreign diplomats, political leaders, and high civil and military officials were present.

Flanked by cabinet members and BNP Standing Committee members, Tarique, also chairman of the ruling BNP, placed two additional wreaths on behalf of the cabinet and his party.

He later exchanged pleasantries with freedom fighters, family members of the martyrs, and other guests present.

Later, Deputy Speaker Barrister Kayser Kamal, on behalf of Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, paid homage at the memorial.

Opposition leader and Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman also placed wreaths and offered prayers for the martyrs, seeking peace and prosperity for the country.

The prime minister, accompanied by his daughter, then reviewed the Independence Day and National Day parade held at the National Parade Ground.

They arrived at the parade ground

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A life cut short, a campus in grief

JU mourns 25-year-old Rayan killed in bus plunge

SAKIB AHMED and SUZIT KUMAR DAS

In classrooms, the debating club, the cultural space and friend circles, Rayan was a beloved student and peer across the Jahangirnagar University campus.



His vibrant presence, amicable behaviour and organisational skills had won the hearts of many.

But all that has now become a distant memory, as Ahnaf Tahmid Khan Rayan, 25, a student of the economics department, was among those who lost their lives after a bus plunged into the Padma before boarding a ferry at Rajbari's Daulatdia on Wednesday.

His mother, Rehana Akter, and his young nephew, Tajbid Bin Mosabbir, were also killed in the accident, while his elder sister is undergoing treatment at a hospital.

Mourning the loss, Prapti Taposhi, a former JU student, wrote, "My Rayan is no more. A piece of my heart is gone. He has turned my whole world upside down and left me guilty for the rest of my life."

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Relatives mourn yesterday after at least 26 passengers died when a bus plunged into the Padma River at the Daulatdia Ferry Terminal in Goalanda, Rajbari, the day before.

PHOTO: AFP

PADMA BUS TRAGEDY 26 bodies recovered

5-member probe body formed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

At least 26 bodies have so far been recovered following a bus plunge into the Padma river while boarding a ferry at Daulatdia in Rajbari district on Wednesday.

The rescue operation is still ongoing, said Dewan Sohel Rana, deputy director of Rajbari Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Eight men, seven children and 11 women have died. Of them, 22 bodies have already been handed over to their families, he said.

Recovery operations were carried out by four units, including 10 divers, with support from the army, police, the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), Coast Guard and local administration, according to the fire service.

So far, the identities of 24 victims have been confirmed.

They are Rehana Akhter, 61; Marzina Khatun, 56; Rajib Biswas, 28; Zahura Anti, 27; Kazi Saif, 30; Marzina Akhter, 32; Israfil, 3; Safia Akhter Rintih, 12; Faiz Shahanur, 11; Tajbid, 7; Arman Khan, 31; Najmira Jesmin, 30; Lima Akhter, 26; Jochna, 35; Mukta Khanam, 38; Nasima, 40; Ayesha Akhter Suma, 30; Soha Akhter, 11; Ayesha Siddika, 13; Arman, 7 months; Abdur Rahman, 6; Sabit Hasan, 8; Ahnaf Tahmid Khan, 25; and Ujjal Sheikh, 40.

The district administration is providing Tk 25,000 to each bereaved family and Tk 15,000 to each of the injured to meet their immediate needs, said Md Hafizur Rahman, Rajbari's assistant commissioner and executive magistrate.

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