

LPG price goes up in greater Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Price of liquified petroleum gas (LPG) has gone up in greater Sylhet region due to fall in its production.

A cylinder of LPG which was Tk 500 only a month ago is now being sold at between Tk 550 and 580.

LPG production marked drastic fall in the Rupantarita Praktik Gas Company Limited (RPGCL) at Golapganj in Sylhet during the last few months.

This was due to fall in supply of NGL (Natural Gas Liquid) from two gas wells of Kailashila Gas field on technical ground. RPGCL gets NGL from the gas

wells for producing LPG, sources said.

There is no possibility of improvement in situation in near future, an official said.

Official sources said, the RPGCL reduced LPG supply to the bottling plant since beginning of this month. It came to a halt for the last two days (Tuesday and Wednesday). The bottling plant remained totally shut down during the period.

An official said, supply of LPG to dealers of three state-run companies-Padma, Meghna and Jamuna-reduced to one-third in the last few months. He admitted disappointment among the dealers.

As per a decision of the Ministry of Energy, about one third of LPG produced at RPGCL is supplied to private companies like Jamuna Space Track Joint Venture Limited and Asiatic Oil. The companies market LPG in the northern region.

State-run oil companies-Padma, Meghna and Jamuna-market LPG to other regions. This is why, its crisis in Sylhet region persists, some dealers alleged.

Sylhet Divisional Petroleum Dealers' and Distributors' Association has expressed concern over the situation. They have appealed to the higher authorities to take steps immediately to resolve the crisis.

AUGUST 17 SERIAL BLASTS JMB man confesses to carrying out Barguna bombings

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A member of Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) suicide squad (Ehsar) has confessed to carrying out bomb blasts at seven points in Barguna town on August 17 last year.

Masum Billah, 19, who earlier surrendered to the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), gave his statement to the elite force last Sunday.

In the statement, he disclosed some 'important' information about JMB network and activities in Patuakhali and Barguna region.

Billah, son of Abdul Karim Molla of Padma village under Patharghata upazila in Barguna district, surrendered to Rab-8 at Patuakhali following detention of his parents.

Rab sources said Billah joined JMB in 2001. Astar Rahman Sunny trained him in Jhikargachha area in Jessore. Later, he became the outfit's regional in-charge of Patuakhali

and Barguna.

Rab sources said he would be handed over to Barguna police soon after the interrogation.

Meanwhile, the cross examination of witnesses in a case lodged in connection with the killing of two judges in Jhalakati on November 14 last year began at the Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal here on Tuesday.

On the first day of the trial lodged under Explosives Acts, witnessed a serious debate regarding the trial procedure.

Killer Mamun, JMB leaders Sunny and Awal, three arrested accused of the case were awarded each 40 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) on Thursday last after they pleaded guilty.

Fifteen out of 26 witnessed including the complainant, widow of a victim, cops, forensic experts, were summoned on Tuesday.

As many as 44 charge sheeted witnesses are expected to be examined.

One gets 14-yr RI for kidnapping boy in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A court here on Tuesday sentenced one person to 14 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) for kidnapping a minor boy.

Judge of Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Damon Tribunal in Sylhet Md Jashim Uddin passed the verdict after examining all the witnesses.

The prosecution case in brief is that, one Nasiruddin kidnapped 3-year boy Ali Ahmed from village Toakul under Gowainghat upazila on February 26, 2001.

Local people caught Nasiruddin in Salutikor area while fleeing from the village along with the boy. Later, he was handed over to the police.

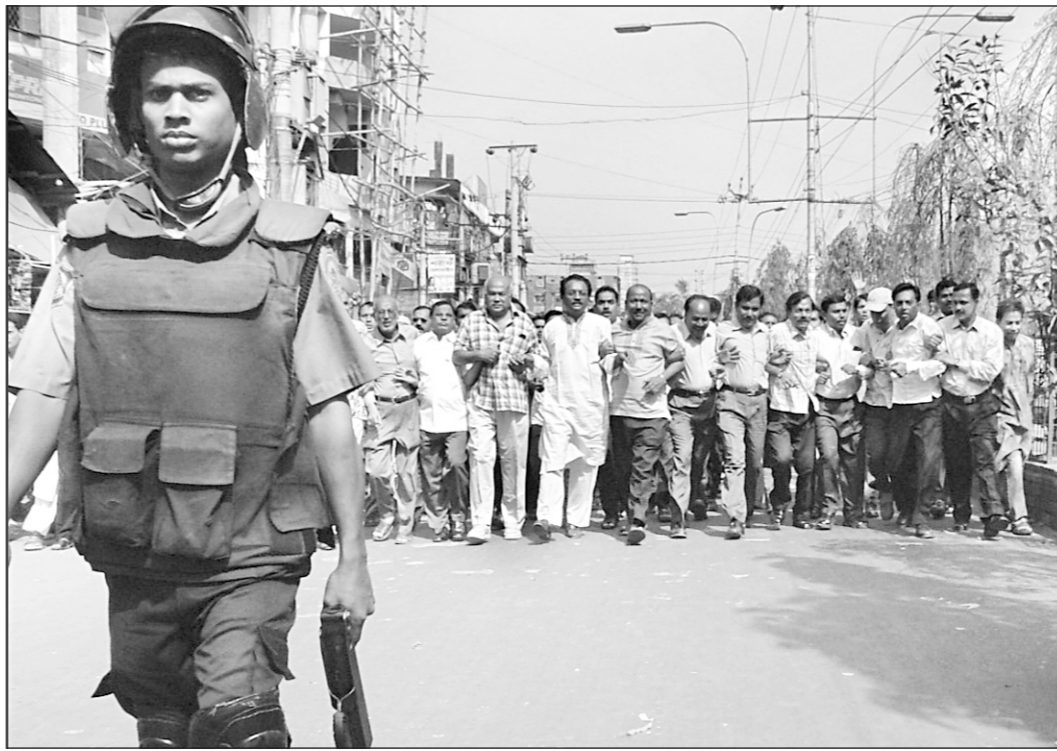
Father buys daughter's freedom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

An eight-year old girl who was abducted on February 12 by while she was returning home from school was rescued yesterday from Khuina city.

Father of Jesmin Akhtar, 8, of village Kumira in Patkelghata thana had to pay Tk 60,000 as ransom for her freedom.

Patkelghata thana officer-in-charge Azam Khan confirmed the incident and said the victim's father did not inform the incident earlier.



Chittagong AL brings out procession in the city during hartal hours yesterday.

PHOTO:STAR

Magura AL yet to have full-fledged committee

Intra-party feud blamed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Dogged by internal feud, Magura district Awami League (AL) could not form a full-fledged committee even after 10 months of its council, held on April 4 last year. The council was held after about 12 years.

Local leaders and activists often blamed newly made president Altaf Hossain and general secretary M.S. Akbar MP for failure to form the committee.

'They are showing apathy as party is not important to them. Both of them are more eager to enjoy its power and facilities,' a top ranking leader of Sadar thana AL seeking anonymity told this correspondent.

Talking to The Daily Star, the new joint-secretary Abu Nasir Bablu said, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil gave directive to form the committee within 'shortest possible' time. But the president and general secretary are yet to call any meeting to form the committee even after nine months of the council.

As the full-fledged committee is yet to be formed, many of grass-roots level leaders have distanced them from organisational activities. This will put the party in difficulty to carry forward the anti-government movement, he said.

A high ranking leader of Shalikhah thana AL, however, alleged that the committee could not be formed as both Altaf Hossain and M.S. Akbar were in a competition to keep their cronies in the leadership.

Party insiders said, rival leaders at different levels are divided into

two groups, one backed by Altaf and the other by Akbar.

The internal feud first surfaced in January 2004 when two rival factions clashed during party councils at several unions and upazilas. Both factions wanted their men in the leadership at different levels. At least 14 incidents of clashes took place between the rival groups.

The party high command summoned top district leaders to Dhaka in March 2004 to resolve the dispute and party chief Sheikh Hasina at a meeting with the leaders in Dhaka on March 8 warned that party committee would be dissolved for its failure to hold the long overdue council.

But the party chief's instruction went unheeded and the district unit virtually split into two factions on September 7, 2004.

The division in local AL became public when two rival factions brought out separate processions in the town protesting the August 21 grenade attack on Sheikh Hasina's rally in Dhaka.

The long overdue council also became uncertain. The last council was held in 1992.

AL central organising secretary Abdul Mannan at a meeting here on December 26, 2004 asked the district leaders to resolve the dispute and hold the council within January, 2005. But it could not be held due to internal feud, according to party insiders.

Finally the council took place on April 4 last year in presence of AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil in which Altaf Hossain and M.S. Akbar

MP were made president and general secretary.

Abdul Jalil also announced the name of Tanjel Hossain Khan as the senior vice-president, former MP Biren Shikder as vice-president, Abu Nasir Bablu as joint-secretary and Shafiquzzaman Bachchu as the organising secretary.

He also ordered the six newly made leaders to form the full-fledged committee within shortest possible time.

But a full-fledged committee could not be formed even after ten months of the council due to internal feud and disagreements, party insiders said.

Talking to this correspondent new secretary M.S. Akbar, however, denied intra-party feud and said that the committee could not be formed as president Altaf Hossain was sick for the last few months. He assured that the committee would be formed 'very soon'.

Terror attack on Khasia people in Moulvibazar

Betel leaf, other gardens damaged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

An unidentified gang last week attacked homesteads of the indigenous Khasia people at Ichhamoti Chhera Khasia Panpunjee under Kamalganj upazila.

The Khasia people are passing their days in fear and insecurity after the terror attack. They claimed that the community people suffered a loss of property of about Tk 10 lakh during the rampage.

Headman of the Ichhamoti Chhera Khasia Panpunjee Marhih Shon Khasia said, betel leaf garden, plants of lemon, jackfruit and banana on 16 acres of land of the Panpunjee were massively damaged. The gang uprooted about 10,000 plants during the attack, he claimed.

The headman informed that there is a long-standing dispute between Panpunjee people and a nearby tea estate over 80 acres of land.

A case is pending with court in this regard and the court has imposed an injunction order on the

tea estate, he said. He also alleged that Kamalganj upazila police did not register any case even six days after the incident despite lodging of a written complaint.

Officer-in-Charge of Kamalganj police station said that they are investigating the allegation and have taken steps to stop further attacks.

Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Manager of Madan Mohan Tea Estate rejected the allegation of Khasia people saying his people had no link with the attack. 'I knew nothing about it,' the manager said.

Pidison Prodan, President of Greater Sylhet Indigenous Forum has condemned the terror attack on the Panpunjee. He said a section of land grabbers have committed the attack in a planned way.

He demanded immediate investigation and punishment to the culprits.

Khagrachhari road block on as talks end in deadlock

A CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The road blockade in the district continued for fourth day yesterday as a meeting between the indigenous people and the administration ended in a deadlock.

The Khagrachhari Mohalchhari-Rangamati road blockade was jointly called by Zila Nagorik Forum and Jumma Janagan Forum on February 12.

The two indigenous bodies called the road blockade demanding withdrawal of 'outsiders' from the land of hill people.

Khagrachhari district administration earlier took initiative to discuss the issue with the groups of indigenous people and settlers.

Deputy Commissioner Humayun Kabir yesterday chaired the meeting while PCJSS leader Roktutpal Tripura, Rosomoy Chakma, Bakul, police superintendent (SP) Nowsher Ali, District BNP leaders Mostafizur Rahman Millat, Nazrul Islam and Jamaat leader Abdul Momin attended.

The meeting ended without any decision as the indigenous leaders stuck to their demand for withdrawal of the outsiders.

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