



THE DAILY

Star

SECOND EDITION

ON FRIDAY



REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXX No. 46 | FALGUN 15, 1426 BS | Your Right to Know | RAJAB 3, 1441 HIJRI | 24 PAGES PLUS TOGGLE PRICE: Tk 12.00

ELECTRICITY gets costlier

5.3pc hike effective from March 1

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

At a time when people are grappling with high prices of many daily essentials, the government has hiked electricity prices, which is likely to cause a big ripple effect on the economy.

The new rate will take effect from Sunday, and in a few weeks power consumption will increase with farmers irrigating their land and people using fans and ACs as temperatures rise.

Consumer rights activists and economists said the effect will be the hardest on those living paycheque to paycheque.

- » Tariff raised to Tk 7.13 from Tk 6.77 per unit
- » Consumer rights activists denounce hike
- » Rise in power production cost a reason: BERC

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) yesterday announced that each unit of electricity will be Tk 7.13, a 5.3 percent increase from the current rate.

The last time power prices were hiked was in November 2017. It was also a 5.3 percent increase.

"We hiked the price considering the overall economic situation, production cost of electricity and its demand. We have assessed the impact [of the hike] on general public, irrigation, and small and medium entrepreneurs," BERC Chairman Abdul Jalil told reporters at a press conference.

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Charred remains of parked cars inside a building on Dilu Road in the capital's Eskaton. A devastating fire in the building yesterday morning left three people dead and two others critically injured.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

KHALEDA'S BAIL PRAYER Turned down, yet again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday once again rejected a bail petition of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case.

The bail was sought on health and humanitarian grounds.

The court, however, directed the medical board formed by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) to immediately provide "advance treatment" to Khaleda if she gives consent.

The seven-member medical board can include more expert physicians for the BNP chief's treatment, if necessary, it said.

The HC passed the rejection order as the medical board, in a report, said it was able to provide "advance treatment" to Khaleda at BSMMU.

Citing the report, the HC said Khaleda did not give her consent to get "advance treatment" for her arthritis problem.

A convict is given treatment under the... SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



DCCs napping as mosquitoes buzz

Experts warn of a record increase in Culex mosquito population next month

HELEMUL ALAM

As experts warn of a record increase in Culex mosquito population next month, measures taken by the two Dhaka city corporations to check the blood-sucking insects appear inadequate.

At least two recent surveys -- one by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and the other by a team of researchers from Jahangirnagar University -- found the mosquito population density in the capital is likely to multiply in the next two weeks.

In the meantime, people in different parts of the city keep complaining about mosquito nuisance. Besides, they said city corporation drives against the insects appear to have become lax after the city corporation elections on February 1.

"It has become totally unbearable as mosquitoes bite both at night and day," said Tapon Chandra Das, a resident of Dogair under Ward-68 of the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

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Don't let mosquitoes eat up votes

PM asks Dhaka mayors, councillors

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the newly-elected mayors and councillors of the two Dhaka cities to pay special attention to check mosquitoes, particularly Aedes, so that the insect cannot eat up their votes.

"There's a problem again with dengue. You'll have to... SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bangladeshis' Umrah now uncertain

S Arabia imposes ban over coronavirus fears; India takes 23 Bangladeshis from China

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Umrah for around 10,000 Bangladeshis, who already got visas, has become uncertain as the Saudi government yesterday placed a temporary ban on Umrah pilgrimage to stop the spread of coronavirus in the Kingdom.

However, Bangladeshis who have obtained work permits and employment visas can fly to the Middle-Eastern country on their scheduled flights, Biman Bangladesh Airlines said in a press release yesterday.

Saudi Arabia announced the ban after more than 330 cases were confirmed around the Middle East, said a UK-based newspaper.

Sources at Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet international airports said no... SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

'I know my son is dead; bury him in Dhaka'

Says Eskaton fire victim moments before being put on life support

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Just before being put on life support, Shahidul Kirmany Rony, who had sustained 43 percent inhalation burns, told his sister Nasrin Akter, "I know my son has died, bury him in Dhaka. Our condition is also not good; I don't know what will happen. Tell father to decide [about us too]."

Rony, 40, and his wife Jannatul Fardaus, 38, who sustained 95 percent inhalation burns from a devastating fire that completely burned a side of a five-storey building in Eskaton early yesterday morning, were both on life support at the intensive care unit of Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic surgery. Their only son, four-year-old AKM Rushdi, and two others -- a buying house staffer Abdul Kader Liton, 40, and a Vigarunnisa Noon School & College Student Afrin Jahan Juthi, 17 -- died in the fire that started around 4:00am at building no 45/a on Dilu Road.

Dr Samanta Lal Sen, national coordinator of the burn... SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

CLASHES IN DELHI 12 eminent citizens concerned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twelve eminent citizens of Bangladesh yesterday expressed grave concern over the ongoing spate of clashes in the Indian capital New Delhi between people for and against the new citizenship law in the country.

Different social and political forces have been protesting the recently passed Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Delhi and elsewhere across India through demonstrations, statements, and rallies. In the last few days the situation has deteriorated alarmingly, with violent attacks against the CAA protesters, they said.

Mentioning the loss of lives and arson and... SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Security forces patrol past charred vehicles in a riot affected area following clashes between people demonstrating for and against a new citizenship law in New Delhi yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Uneasy calm in New Delhi after clashes

Death toll rises to 38; skirmishes reported; OIC, UN rights chief express concern

AGENCIES

uneasy calm yesterday.

At least 38 people have been killed in the deadliest violence to engulf India's capital New Delhi for decades as a heavy deployment of security forces brought an... However, violence did not subside completely and thousands of people began picking up the pieces of their shattered lives and livelihoods.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

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Founder and CEO, Jeeon. Co-founder and Director, mPower Social Enterprises Ltd.

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Salman Saeed
Video Consultant, UNICEF, World Bank Group, CNN, UNDP

IUB was nothing short of a transformative journey. It drove me from being an introvert to become a multi-national professional and the Chair of Bangladesh Debating Council.

Fardeen Ameen
Marketing & Business Development Manager, Digital Division, Grameenphone Ltd. President, Bangladesh Debating Council

IUB equipped me with tools and techniques, to stand out and helped landing on to my dream profession.

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