

LPG prices shoot up in Rangamati

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA,
Rangamati

Sufferings of users have mounted as the prices of liquefied petroleum (LP) gas in the hill town shot up over the last couple of weeks.

Lack of regular monitoring of markets by the authorities gave the unscrupulous gas dealers as well as retailers the scope to sell gas at high prices, locals alleged. Hoarding by the dishonest government LP gas dealers has added to the situation, they said.

Besides residents, most people including restaurant and tea-stall owners use gas in the town. They use it from four sources -- government LP Gas and privately owned Total Gas, Bashundhara and Kleen Heat LP gas.

Though the supply by Total Gas, Bashundhara and Kleen Heat LP gas often remains steady in the local markets, their prices shoot up due to crisis of government LP gas.

While visiting different markets in the town on Wednesday, this correspondent found the traders selling a cylinder of LP Gas at Tk 1250 to 1350 in place of the government fixed price

of Tk 750.

The price of Total Gas shot up just in a week. A cylinder is now being sold at Tk 1670 whereas it was Tk 1450 only 7-10 days ago.

A cylinder of Bashundhara LP Gas is also being sold at Tk 1680 in place of Tk 1450 and Kleen Heat is being sold at Tk 1700 in place of 1450 around two weeks ago, market sources said.

"I bought government's LP gas since I started using gas at my house about 15 years ago. Unfortunately, I now often buy other gases at almost double their prices", said Joton Das of Banarupa.

Some policemen and officials of district administration who were supposed to monitor gas price in the town remain indifferent to their job as they allegedly get gas either in fixed price or free of cost from the dealers, alleged several users.

On the other hand, the private gas distributors, in collusion with the local retailers, are allegedly increasing gas prices. It becomes evident when the government gas supply falls short, they said.

"Despite all sincerity I

could not supply gas regularly to the townspeople due to shortage of production", said Moniruzzaman Mohsin Rana, a government LP gas dealer at Banarupa.

Refuting the allegation of hoarding gas, he said he never sold it at higher prices.

Meanwhile, many gas users in the town have started using firewood because of unusual hike in gas prices.

"I am now using firewood as gas prices have gone beyond my capability," said Dipan Chakma, adding that his neighbours have also taken the decision to use firewood.

Contacted, Nandit Roy, the town's lone distributor of Total Gas, said they were compelled to raise the price as the company increased the price through a notification a few days ago.

Surendra Nath Chakrabarty, deputy commissioner of Rangamati, said action would be taken in case of any irregularities by dealers.

"We always monitor the market to keep the prices of all essentials reasonable," the DC added.

SUNDAY'S VIOLENCE

Police sue 250 workers of Ishwardi EPZ

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Pabna

Police yesterday filed a case against 250 workers of Ishwardi Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in connection with Sunday's violence.

Meanwhile, a probe committee would be formed today to investigate the matter, said the EPZ sources.

On Sunday, several hundred people were injured in a clash between police and workers of Roshita Knitting Wear Limited, set up by a foreign company, at the EPZ.

The workers were demanding pay hike.

The agitated workers

Follow-up

also confined foreigners, all of them executives of the factory.

The clash began at around 9:00am and continued for about five hours, said Mahamud Hassan, the general manager (GM) of Ishwardi EPZ.

Following the violence, police picked up 78 workers from the spot.

The workers said they had long been demanding Tk 150 knitting charge for every sweater but the factory paid only Tk 100.

A few unruly workers have plotted the unrest at

the EPZ to discourage foreign investment, said the GM. The authorities sacked a few workers responsible for the violence, he added.

Regarding the wage hike demand, he said it was under discussion.

Md Akbar Hossain, officer in-charge of Ishwardi police station, said Abdur Razzak, sub-inspector of the PS, filed a case against the workers on charge of assaulting police.

The law enforcers sent the arrestees to jail. Meanwhile, the EPZ remained closed on the Independence Day yesterday, said the OC.

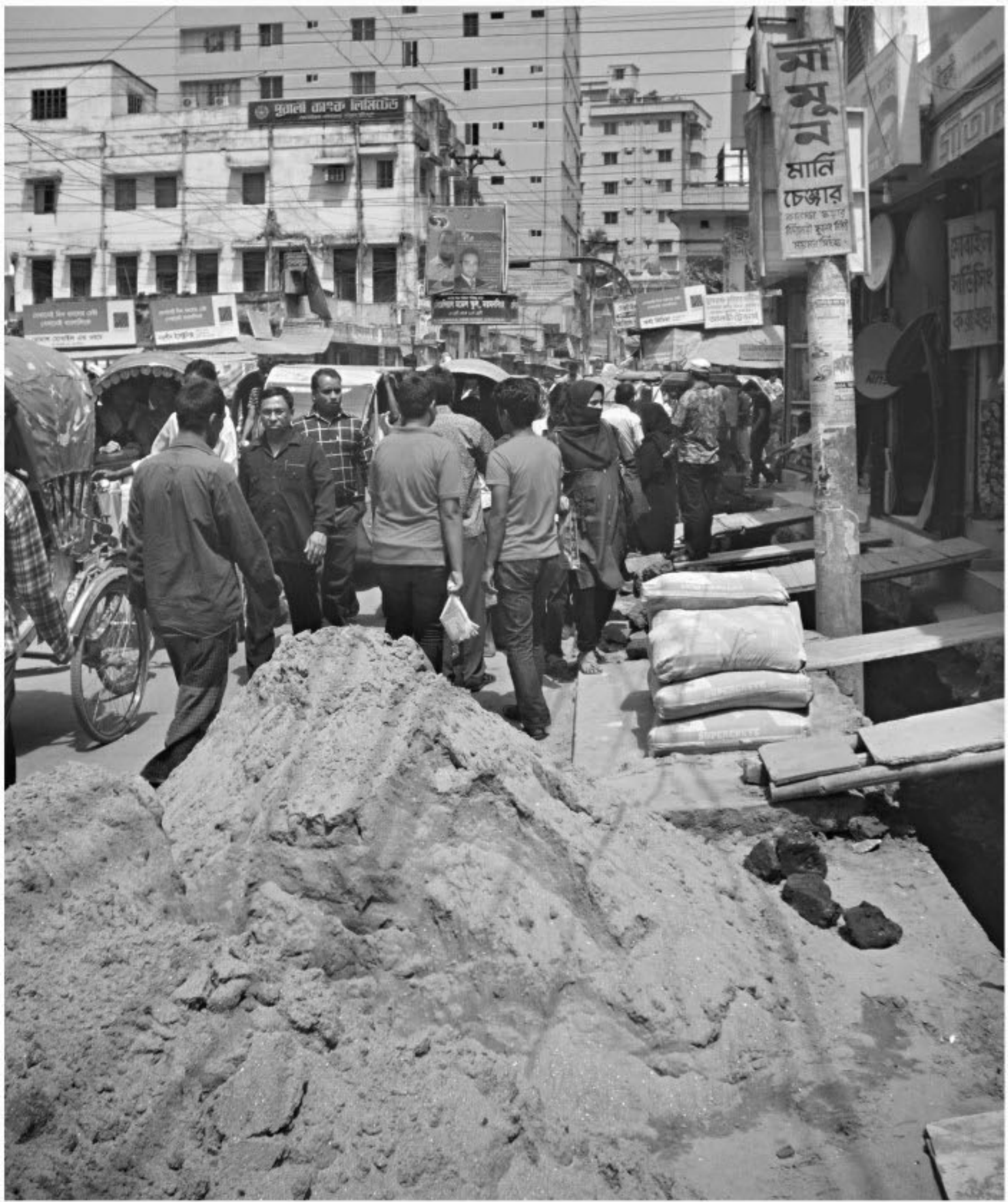


PHOTO: STAR

Construction work of a drain at CK Ghosh Road, an important commercial area of Mymensingh town, goes on for about two weeks now, keeping materials on the road, much to the trouble of the pedestrians. The work will need several more days to be completed, workers at the site said. The photo was taken on Saturday.

SNAPSHOTS OF INDEPENDENCE DAY



PHOTO: STAR

Independence Day celebration in districts: 1) Freedom fighters take part in a march past at Pabna Stadium, 2) performers at Shah Abdul Hamid Stadium in Gaibandha town depict scenes of the Liberation War, 3) children perform colourful display at Munshiganj Stadium, 4) students of Patuakhali Government Girls' High School take part in physical feats, 5) teachers and students of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University in Trishal upazila of Mymensingh district bring out a colourful procession on the campus and 6) children render patriotic songs on the premises of the Central Shaheed Minar in Sylhet city marking the National and Independence Day yesterday.

ERRATIC POWER SUPPLY

Motors of 130 Barind deep tubewells go out of order

UNB, Thakurgaon

Motors of around 130 deep tubewells of Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) have burned up recently allegedly due to erratic power supply.

Jahangir Alam, superintending engineer of BMDA-2, confirmed the matter saying new motors have been installed instantly so that irrigation is not hampered in Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and Dinajpur districts under BMDA.

There are 2,931 deep tubewells of the organisation in three districts. Of those, 1,230 are in Thakurgaon, he said.

Shahidur Rahman, executive engineer of BMDA-2, said Thakurgaon district

needs 50-60 megawatt of power. However, it gets half of the demand now.

He said due to frequent power outages and low voltage it becomes difficult to run the deep tubewells. He, however, said that power supply sometimes remain steady.

Belayet Hossain, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension, said some 40,000 shallow tubewells and irrigation pumps are also being operated in the district.

He said at least 67,554 hectares of land would be brought under Boro cultivation during the current season in the district with a production target of 261,716 tonnes of paddy.

Patient's death sparks protest

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Locals of the town's bus terminal area blocked Rangpur-Dhaka highway yesterday for about three hours from 2:00 pm, protesting death of a patient allegedly due to wrong treatment at a private clinic.

Later they withdrew the blockade following intervention of police and Rab.

Police at Kotwali PS said Dr. Habib Reza Bosunia, a surgeon of Samata Clinic in Rangpur bus terminal area conducted operation on the throat of Arefa Khatun, 35, wife of Jamsed Ali of village on Sunday night. She was

suffering from infection of tonsil for long. The patient died minutes after the operation.

Jamsed alleged that his wife died due to wrong treatment. He lodged a case with Kotwali police station.

Superintendent of police Saleh Mohammad Tanvir said police recorded the case but yet to be ascertained whether she died of wrong treatment.

Contacted, Dr. Habib Bosunia said, the patient died due to vulnerable post-operative management. Anesthesiologist Dr. Rafiqul Islam also refuted the allegation of wrong operation.

Several Sirajganj roads in bad shape for long

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Sirajganj

Several important roads in the district have remained in an awful condition due to lack of repair work for long.

Due to potholes and damages in the roads, thousands of people experience bumpy ride while the heavy vehicles often get stuck in the earth. The situation becomes worse in the rainy season, said locals.

The roads include Enayetpur KG More-Shahzadpur Road, Kaizuri-Zamir Road, Kamarkhand-Ullapara

Road, Ullapara-Mohanpur Road, Mahisluti-Taras Road, Salanga-Nimgachi Road, Dhagara-Bengnai-Pangashi Road and Kazipur-Simla Road.

Among those, Enayetpur-Shahzadpur Road often sees huge traffic jam as handloom traders use it for weekly market twice a week.

Roads with damaged carpeting cause frequent accidents to vehicles carrying passengers and goods, said residents in Shahzadpur.

The Kaizuri-Jamir Road, built on an embankment, was badly damaged

during the last flood. But it is yet to be repaired. Besides, the bad condition of Mahisluti-Tarash Road adds to sufferings of pedestrians.

The Local Government Engineering Directorate (LGED) office in the district seems indifferent to the condition of the roads, locals alleged.

Contacted, Golam Mostafa, executive engineer of LGED, said the renovation work of the roads was in progress.

However, this correspondent, while visiting those roads, found no activities in favour of his claims.



PHOTO: STAR

Pitiable condition of Pangasi-Nalka road at Hatpangashi Point in Sirajganj district. Several other roads are also in similar state.